



Early Journal Content on JSTOR, Free to Anyone in the World

This article is one of nearly 500,000 scholarly works digitized and made freely available to everyone in the world by JSTOR.

Known as the Early Journal Content, this set of works include research articles, news, letters, and other writings published in more than 200 of the oldest leading academic journals. The works date from the mid-seventeenth to the early twentieth centuries.

We encourage people to read and share the Early Journal Content openly and to tell others that this resource exists. People may post this content online or redistribute in any way for non-commercial purposes.

Read more about Early Journal Content at <http://about.jstor.org/participate-jstor/individuals/early-journal-content>.

JSTOR is a digital library of academic journals, books, and primary source objects. JSTOR helps people discover, use, and build upon a wide range of content through a powerful research and teaching platform, and preserves this content for future generations. JSTOR is part of ITHAKA, a not-for-profit organization that also includes Ithaka S+R and Portico. For more information about JSTOR, please contact support@jstor.org.

IMPRECATION AGAINST THE MINIM IN THE
SYNAGOGUE.

It is known that the Fathers of the Church, both Greek and Roman, hurl against the Jews the accusation that they pronounced in the Synagogue an imprecation against the Christians. As far as I know the literature on this point, all modern scholars think of the so-called benediction about the heretics (ברכת המינים) in the daily Tefillah, and I have myself dealt with the subject from this point of view in this REVIEW (V, 130-134)¹. Now, in that benediction the wish is uttered and the prayer made that the wicked may be punished, but on a close consideration, an actual curse, an imprecation, will not be found there. Another difficulty is that the Fathers of the Church say also that the curse was pronounced *after* the prayer, i.e. after the conclusion of the Tefillah², according to which our ברכת המינים³ cannot be meant.

I believe I am fortunate enough to be able to throw some light on this subject.

Haman's accusation in Esth. iii. 8-9, which has become typical for later times, is interpreted by the Midrashim to the passage in this way,

¹ On that occasion I tried to prove, that the word הרשעים or הרשעה meant really the name of a sect. I add now, to the various readings, from *Machsor Vitry*, ed. Hurwitz, § 42: וְגַל הַרְשָׁעִים הֵנִיף יָדָא, in the MS. וְגַל הַרְשָׁעִים וְגַל הַרְשָׁעִים (communicated by M. Weiss in the Hungarian Essay, *Machsor Vitry*, p. 15, note 44). Cf. also the expression רשעים in Koheleth Rabba, I, 8 (Mathnoth Kehuna, ad loc., must have connected the passage with Christianity, for the Wilna edition, 1884, subjected to censorship shows here a blank). Cf. Koheleth Rabba, VII, 26, also Geiger's remark in *Urschrift*, p. 154, and Derenburg, *Essai sur l'histoire de la Palestine*, p. 362, note 2; also *ibid.*, p. 345, note 2.

² Schürer, *Geschichte des jüdischen Volkes im Zeitalter Jesu Christi*, II, 2nd ed., p. 386, note 164: "It is noteworthy that later the form of imprecation was pronounced *after the prayer*;" vid. my remark on this in this REVIEW, V, p. 131, note 3.

³ The enemies of the Jews have nevertheless always attacked this benediction, vid. Landshut's observations in סדר הניקן לב (Königsberg, 1845), p. 61.

As the Jalkut says clearly that the curse was pronounced after the Tefillah, there must have been something in the order of the prayers which could have called forth the accusation. One thinks in the first instance of the prayer עֲלֵינוּ, which really contains an imprecation against the nations, of course only against the idolatrous ones⁷. It is known, however, that this prayer has no connexion with the reading of the Torah. It would, therefore, be preferable to think of

⁷ In the Spanish and Italian prayer-books, after בְּנֵי הַמִּינִם, there is a sentence: שֶׁהֵם מִשְׁתַּחֲוִים לַחֵבֶל וְרוֹק וּמִתְפַּלְלִים אֶל אֵל לֹא יוֹשֵׁעַ, which could very easily be thought to refer to Christianity. The absence of the sentence is, in *Machsor Vitry*, indicated by points (p. 75).

the so-called יהי רצון, which is recited on Mondays and Thursdays, the days of the reading of the Torah, and which, indeed, contains a passage which would be open to malicious attack¹. But this would be in contradiction with the information of the Fathers of the Church that the curse was pronounced daily, and even three times a day. I must, therefore, still consider as an open one the question as to which passage they misinterpreted into an imprecation.

SAMUEL KRAUSS.

¹ The piece is already found in Siddur R. Amram, as Baer says in his Siddur; *ibid.* also the words להשמיד איירי. Vid. also about this prayer לברש and וקניס to Orach Chajim, § 429. Mr. A. Gestetner of Budapest brought under my notice that N. Brüll attributes the authorship of the prayer to R. Levi Bezalel (*Wiener Jahrbuch*, 1868, p. 189). Spanish and Italian prayer-books do not have the prayer.